

NEWS RELEASE



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Addition to Malibu Creek State Park

State Parks Gets Final Approval To Acquire Soka Property

SACRAMENTO -- State Parks Director Ruth Coleman today announced that the long-awaited desire of California State Parks to acquire a portion of the Soka/King Gillette Ranch has been given the final go-ahead by the State Public Works Board. The approval came today in a unanimous 3-to-0 vote of the board in Sacramento.

"We are thrilled and excited about finally being able to acquire what we see as a crown jewel of the Santa Monica Mountains," said Ruth Coleman, Director of California State Parks. "We have been trying to acquire this wonderful parcel since the mid-1970's and as of today, all the partners in this endeavor are now on course to preserve this magnificent natural landscape."

The action today by the State Public Works Board authorizes California State Parks to acquire 102 of the total 588 acres. The State Parks parcel consists of an irregular-shaped area situated on the southwest corner of the Soka property in the County of Los Angeles. It is adjacent to and will be added to the existing 15,000 acre Malibu Creek State Park. Because it will be added to the existing park, all costs for management of the property will be handled with existing resources. State Parks will provide park ranger patrols using existing staff.

The property is almost exclusively oak woodland, chaparral, and annual grassland. It is in native condition, with the exception of a few access roads and a small building at the edge of the property. The entire 588 acres of the Soka University property is seen as a critical habitat linkage for wildlife such as mountain lions, bobcats, badgers, and other animals within the Santa Monica Mountains.

The Legislature has approved \$7.15 million in funding from Proposition 40 as the State Parks' portion of the \$35 million needed to purchase the entire 588 acres. Other partners and fund sources are: Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, \$1.23 million; Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, \$10 million; National Park Service, \$2.5 million; State Wildlife Conservation Board, \$5 million; State Coastal Conservancy Board, \$5.5 million; Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission, \$2.5 million; County of Los Angeles, Prop. A, \$2 million; Calabasas, \$250,000; and, Agoura Hills, \$250,000. Escrow is anticipated to close in late March 2005.

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